

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1. (Previously presented) A multi-vendor internet commerce system (MV-ICS) for efficiently enabling e-commerce through the Internet for a plurality of vendors having vendor-sites and a plurality of consumers being in contact with the vendor-sites, the system comprising:

a centrally implemented multi-vendor central processing unit (MV-CPU) that acts as a shared processing location for the plurality of vendors;

a centrally implemented multi-vendor shared datastore (MV-SD) that acts cooperatively with the MV-CPU and serves as a shared datastore for the plurality of vendors;

at least one vendor-site I/O module that is used by at least one of the plurality of vendors to interface with the MV-CPU and MV-SD;

at least one consumer-interface I/O module that is used by at least one consumer to interface with the MV-CPU and MV-SD,

wherein the MV-SD relieves individual vendor websites from the burden of setting up and maintaining at least a portion of certain facilities contained on the MV-SD, and the MV-CPU ensures that appropriate communication occurs between each vendor website and the MV-SD, wherein the MV-SD includes at least a consumer database, which tracks consumer profiles on behalf of the plurality of participating vendor websites, wherein the consumer database and MV-CPU provides the consumer a single payment process to purchase a plurality of items from a plurality of the plurality of vendors.

Claim 2. (Original) The multi-vendor Internet commerce system of Claim 1, wherein implementation of certain facilities and other shared resources on the MV-SD is substantially transparent to the consumer contacting the MV-ICS.

Claim 3. (Original) The multi-vendor Internet commerce system of Claim 1, wherein vendors who are otherwise unrelated or unknown to each other share the Internet commerce system.

Claims 4-6 (Cancelled).

Claim 7. (Previously Presented) A multi-vendor Internet commerce system (MV-ICS) for efficiently enabling e-commerce through the Internet for a plurality of vendors having vendor-sites and a plurality of consumers gaining access to contents of the vendor-sites, the system comprising:

a centrally implemented multi-vendor central processing unit (MV-CPU) that acts as a shared processing location for the plurality of vendors;

a centrally implemented multi-vendor shared datastore (MV-SD) that acts cooperatively with the MV-CPU and serves as a shared datastore for the plurality of vendors;

at least one vendor-site I/O module that is used by at least one of the plurality of vendors to interface with the MV-CPU and MV-SD;

at least one consumer-interface I/O module that is used by at least one consumer to interface with the MV-CPU and MV-SD,

wherein the MV-SD relieves individual vendor websites from the burden of setting up and maintaining at least a portion of certain facilities contained on the MV-SD, and the MV-CPU ensures that appropriate communication occurs between each vendor website and the MV-SD, wherein the MV-SD includes at least a consumer database, which tracks consumer profiles on behalf of the plurality of participating vendor websites, wherein the consumer profile includes a universal, cross-vendor shopping cart into which items selected from a plurality of vendors may be deposited, and wherein the centrally implemented MV-SD includes at least a product database containing detailed descriptions of products offered for sale from the plurality of vendors; and

checkout logic stored in the MV-ICS for providing a checkout page to the at least one consumer that is able to provide costs for the items selected from the plurality of vendors wherein the costs include tax and shipping costs and a single checkout procedure provides for submitting to the MV-CPU, a single purchase order of items from different vendors placed in the shopping cart for the purchase of the items selected from the plurality of vendors, wherein the MV-CPU manages said single purchase order so that vendors providing the items will each receive information for any items purchased from that vendor, including at least one of the following: the amount of the purchase, any shipping information, billing address, e-mail address, phone number or credit card number.

Claim 8. (Original) The multi-vendor Internet commerce system of Claim 1, wherein the MV-SD includes at least a vendor database, which tracks the participating vendor profiles and their websites.

Claim 9. (Original) The multi-vendor Internet commerce system of Claim 1, wherein MV-SD includes at least a product database representing a database of products offered for sale by the participating vendors.

Claim 10. (Original) The multi-vendor Internet commerce system of Claim 9, wherein the product database includes catalog representations of the products offered for sale.

Claim 11. (Previously Presented) The multi-vendor Internet commerce system of Claim 1, wherein the MV-CPU includes gift registry logic for receiving items from various websites that have been selected by the consumers to be searchably placed into various gift registries.

Claim 12. (Previously Presented) A multi-vendor Internet commerce system (MV-ICS) for efficiently enabling e-commerce through the Internet for a plurality of vendors having vendor-sites and a plurality of consumers gaining access to contents of the vendor-sites, the system comprising:

a centrally implemented multi-vendor central processing unit (MV-CPU) that acts as a shared processing location for the plurality of vendors;

a centrally implemented multi-vendor shared datastore (MV-SD) that acts cooperatively with the MV-CPU and serves as a shared datastore for the plurality of vendors;

at least one vendor-site I/O module that is used by at least one of the plurality of vendors to interface with the MV-CPU and MV-SD;

at least one consumer-interface I/O module that is used by at least one consumer to interface with the MV-CPU and MV-SD,

wherein the MV-SD relieves individual vendor websites from the burden of setting up and maintaining at least a portion of certain facilities contained on the MV-SD, and the MV-CPU ensures that appropriate communication occurs between each vendor website and the MV-SD, wherein the MV-CPU includes shopping cart logic for receiving items from various websites that have been selected by the consumers to be placed into the universal shopping cart for viewing, adding, removing, or purchasing that item, wherein the shopping cart is centrally implemented and is a persistent storage structure that is capable of holding items for purchases that have been selected by the consumer from a plurality of the vendors' offerings until those items are checked out;

checkout logic stored in the MV-ICS for providing a checkout page to the at least one consumer that is able to provide costs for the items selected from the plurality of vendors wherein the costs include tax and shipping costs and a single checkout procedure provides a single invoice for consumer approval to complete the transaction, said single invoice with items from different vendors for the purchase of the items selected from the plurality of vendors; and

conveyance logic in the MV-ICS communicating information to each vendor about any items purchased from that vendor, the amount of the purchase, and any shipping information, wherein if the MV-ICS acts as the merchant of record, the checkout logic will debit consumer's credit card or account or, if the merchants of record are the vendors themselves, conveyance logic will transmit the payment data to the vendors so that the amount purchased from each vendor may be debited.

Claim 13. (Previously Presented) The multi-vendor Internet commerce system of Claim 1, wherein the MV-CPU includes sign-in logic for presenting an authentication page to the consumer and performing the authentication of known users or registration of new users.

Claim 14. (Original) The multi-vendor Internet commerce system of Claim 1, wherein the MV-CPU includes conveyance logic for communicating the information to each vendor about the items purchased from the vendor including at least the amount of the purchase and any shipping information.

Claims 15-19 (Cancelled).

Claim 20. (Previously Presented) The multi-vendor Internet commerce system of claim 1, wherein the single payment process is a single checkout process.

Claim 21. (Previously Presented) The multi-vendor Internet commerce system of claim 1, wherein a consumer credit card number is stored in the consumer database, wherein the stored consumer credit card number allows purchases from the plurality of vendors.

Claim 22. (Previously Presented) The multi-vendor Internet commerce system of claim 1, wherein the MV-CPU is able to charge consumers directly and notify the plurality of vendors of purchases.

Claim 23. (Previously Presented) The multi-vendor Internet commerce system of claim 1, wherein the MV-CPU obtains payment and shipping data from the consumers and forwards the data to the plurality of vendors.

Claim 24. (Previously Presented) The multi-vendor Internet commerce system of claim 1, wherein the MV-SD contains tax tables, discount schedules, and shipping costs from the plurality of vendors

Claim 25. (Previously Presented) The multi-vendor Internet commerce system of claim 1, wherein the MV-CPU forwards consumer shipping data to the plurality of vendors.

Claim 26. (Previously Presented) The multi-vendor Internet commerce system of claim 1, wherein the MV-CPU forwards consumer credit card information to the plurality of vendors, wherein the vendors charge the consumers.

Claim 27. (Amended) A method of implementing a multi-vendor internet commerce system (MV-ICS) for efficiently enabling e-commerce through the Internet for a plurality of vendors and a plurality of consumers, the method comprising:

providing a centrally implemented multi-vendor central processing unit (MV-CPU) that acts as a shared processing location for the plurality of vendors;

providing a centrally implemented multi-vendor shared datastore (MV-SD) that acts cooperatively with the MV-CPU and serves as a shared datastore for the plurality of vendors;

providing one website hosted on at least one server, wherein the website sells products to the consumers from the plurality of vendors, wherein the MV-SD includes at least one database with detailed product descriptions for products from the plurality of vendors,

providing a universal shopping cart for a consumer to add items to purchase from different vendors, [said]

wherein said one website allows consumers to buy products from multiple vendors without having to leave the one website to view detailed product information from different vendors and without having to enter another vendor website to add products from different vendors into the universal shopping cart; and

wherein said one website has a checkout process enabling the consumer to submit one order containing products from multiple vendors and placed in said universal shopping cart, wherein the MV-ICS has logic that takes said one order and communicates information to the vendors about any items in the one order purchased from that vendor, the amount of the purchase, and any shipping information.

Claim 28. (Amended) The method of claim 27 wherein said logic comprises conveyance logic in the MV-ICS communicating information to each vendor about any items purchased from that vendor, the amount of the purchase, and any shipping information, wherein if the MV-ICS acts as the merchant of record, the checkout logic will debit consumer's credit card or account or, if the merchants of record are the vendors themselves, conveyance logic will transmit the payment data to the vendors so that the amount of the purchase[d] from each vendor may be debited.

Claim 29. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 27 wherein the shopping cart comprises a persistent storage structure that is capable of holding items for purchases that have been selected by the consumer from a plurality of vendors until those items are checked out.

Claim 30. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 27 wherein the MV-SD includes at least one vendor database wherein a vendor stores rules regarding checkout process for that vendor and includes at least one rule selected from the following: shipping information, tax tables, discounts or markups.

Claim 31. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 27 wherein the MV-SD provides a common shopping cart facility and a common checkout facility for the plurality of vendors.

Claim 32. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 27 wherein the MV-SD furnishes all textual description, graphics, and price information pertaining to the selected items, along with as a vendor profile for MV-ICS to perform the checkout process, which includes calculating the cost correctly for the item selected for purchase.

Claim 33. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 27 wherein the product database represents at least some of the products offered for sale by participating vendors.